[196] I would like to direct the attention of future travelers to the following plants, the leaves and blossoms of which are greatly desired. If he would like to become acquainted with the wild field fruits of the old inhabitants of the country: 222 137

a) "omamigaub is a plant with succulent leaves; the carrot-like underground part has a strong purgative effect. The name of the plant expresses this drastically: "one lets it fall (!gau) at the door (ama) of the hut (oma)", or, more optimistically translated, "one just makes it to the courtyard." [Picture, omamigaub. 1/2 natural size. The "Ostrich foot". 2/3 natural size.] [278]

) "!ga-/marib- (3.n. cf. p. 352.) or /ha-hab has a smooth, carrot-like, underground part and thin, narrow leaves, 3 centimeters long and crinkled at the edges.

)"/hâu-hus forms juicy root formations as big as a child's head.

Pelargonium incrassatum Curt., called "/a-migbi-b, the "Ostrich foot", (so called because of the shape of the budding leaves) is the last of the plants which should be mentioned here because of their edible underground parts.

b) The chief fruits are gourds and cucumbers because of the abundant water in their flesh and the food content of their seeds.

The Topnaars in the region of Walvis Bay received their name !na-nain from the gourd fruit !na-!ab, the Acanthosicyos horrida Welw., on which they live for a large part of the year (cf. Analysis in the appendix). The nara matures in the first four months of the year; the chief harvest time is in February and March. [101]

Then the kraals become desolate. The poorer families depart for the dunes with all their belongings, either taking their mat house with them or building a scanty shelter of brushwood, which can scarcely be called a hut, and only return to their old dwellings to get water when it is unavailable in the nara field. Wealthier Hottentots stay at home and have the nara brought to them by slaves and only go out for the day on a visit or for inspection. [Picture. Half-ripe nara fruit. 2/3 natural size] 221 222 [302] [567]

The individual families have inherited rights to definite nara bushes (cf. Plate IX above and illustrations, page 146, 147). That is the only case known to me of private ownership of immoveable property outside of the hut area among the Hottentots. The Hottentot defends his nara bushes from attacks by fellow tribesmen by bringing a legal complaint before the captain. No quarter is given the Berg-damaras and Bushmen. I know of several cases in which the thieves 222 423 [628] 222 423 631

were simply shot down at the place by the nara bush where the owner found their tracks and meted out the death sentence. If the captain takes notice of such an occurrence at all, he never takes the side of the slain man.

[190] For the preparation of the nara I found that the Hottentots in the Walvis Bay region possessed bone knives made from the ribs or the lower leg bone of cattle. The word for such a bone knife, *ǂâ-ns (3, f) seems to me to mean "the little sharp one" (ǂâ - to be sharp, -ns, dimin., -s, personal suff., fem.). [Picture. Ornamented Bone Knives of the Topnaam, about 1/2 natural size.]

The fruit is cut in half with these knives, and in times of abundance, eaten raw. The insides, which can easily be separated from the rind when the fruit is ripe, fall naturally into five double sections, have a pale reddish-yellow color and are saturated with a cool sweet juice, which in taste and aroma, is not unlike a thin vanilla-flavored egg drink. But a single fruit suffices to produce on the tongue and gums of the novice an unpleasant feeling of soreness.

The nara achieves its greatest importance as a national dish when it is preserved and stored in the huts for provisions. The peeled fruit is cut into pieces the size of walnuts. The ripe fruits are cooked with a little fat, the unripe with a little water as well and stirred to a pap with a whisk of the most primitive kind, *ǁûi-b (also called !nu/ho-s). Then the hot mass is poured into a sieve, a grass basket, *gabiras, which is shaken up and down by its strong handle until the sulphur-yellow or brownish-yellow pap has strained through. This is poured out on a dune, after a slightly slanted bed has been smoothed out for it. After one or two days, the mass has solidified to a dark-brown flat cake, heavily encrusted with sand at the bottom. [Plate IX, Nara Dune in the Kuiseb River. Salt Crusts in the Namib behind Walvis Bay.] [191] Such a nara cake, *ǂgoa/g(a)a-ribeb, is about 1/2 meter wide and 3/4 of a meter long and 3 millimeters thick, flexible, kneadable, tough, shining with dark streaks when cut, brownish-yellow and frayed when broken. It has the spicy smell of fresh pumpernickel and leaves a greasy sheen on the fingers. When I was first shown the cake, I watched the old torn dirty rag expectantly as it was being unwrapped and in which I expected to see the delicacy, until I realised that it was the cake itself that was being handled. It tastes better than it looks: sweet, powerful and aromatic; it dissolves slowly in the mouth.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Nama

family surname. That of the */Gari /Naguman*, for example, is Swarthooi, and that of the */Nâsi Ein*, another of the Swarthooi clans, is Bricken. Other clans have several of these surnames, e.g. those of the */Gurusin* clan of the same tribe are Swarthooi, Gertze, Richter, and Van der Bijl, and little genealogical connection can now be traced between the different family groups bearing these names. Members of the same clan, however, all considered themselves blood relatives, and were bound together by various common rules and observances. Marriage within the clan was strongly forbidden, so that a man had to seek his wife in another clan. The children belonged to the clan of their father. Apart from thus restricting marriage and regulating descent, and with it inheritance and succession, the clan seems to have functioned mainly as a political unit. There is no record of any ceremonial observances and taboos specially connected with the clan organization, nor was there anything in the nature of totemism among the Hottentots. The members of a clan all tended to live together, and membership of a clan guaranteed a person a strong measure of protection. He could always count on the support of his fellow-clansmen, especially in the case of blood feud. Early last century the vendetta system was still in force among the Naman, even between clans of the same tribe, and the chief of the tribe was unable to prevent two clans from carrying out blood vengeance on each other, or to force them to accept compensation.

The clan was thus the strongest unit ever attained by the Naman. Time and again a powerful clan would go off on its own, asserting its independence of the others, and clan loyalty was always stronger than tribal loyalty. The chief of the tribe was little more than *primus inter pares*. He was acknowledged to be the head of the senior clan, and if a man of fine character was accorded a great deal of respect; but the heads of the other clans acted as his council, and he could not do much without their co-operation. The whole conduct of affairs in the tribe was—and still is—the concern of the older men.

The clan structure of the Swarthooois as analysed by Mrs. Hoernlé shows the whole mechanism by which clans and tribes were formed among the Naman. A large and flourishing family would very often have its own favourite pasturing grounds, and be so large as to exclude members of other families or clans. In course of time they would become sufficient unto themselves, and the headman begin to play the part of a chief. They would arrange migrations to suit themselves independently of the other members of the tribe, and ultimately be

861 conveying to him the type of behaviour expelled of him as a man.
626 Later, as an adult, he may attend and even participate in the conduct of judicial trials, and in this way have the methods of procedure, the traditions and the usages of his people brought home clearly to him. Throughout his life his activities and sentiments are thus being directed and moulded into conformity with the social norms making for the law and order of the group.

626 The non-fulfilment or breach of any recognized norms of behaviour
784 is penalized by sanctions of various kinds, which consequently must also be regarded as means of ensuring observance of the social standards. Some of these sanctions are of a purely ritual nature. Foremost in this category are those underlying the whole conception of */aun*. Here we have an elaborate series of observances and avoidances, pertaining to all the critical stages of life, whose infringement is followed automatically by death, sexual disease, diminished fertility or some similar evil result. There are also various usages connected with hunting, which, according as they are observed or violated, bring good or ill-fortune respectively. The rites performed at visiting old tribal localities, and other rites to be noticed later in connection with the ghosts of dead people, must in the same way be observed in order to avoid the sickness and even death which may be caused by these ghosts. In all these cases departure from a prescribed line of conduct leads automatically to evil consequences, without any direct interference on the part of the community.

626 Sometimes compliance with the social standards of behaviour is secured through unorganized social pressure. Selfishness in regard to food, for example, exposes a man to scorn, a form of chastisement to which the Hottentots, in common with many other primitive peoples, are said to be very sensitive; similarly, stealing is regarded as a disgrace, and the thief, apart from other punishment, is cut by everyone and becomes almost an outcast. Other types of norm, again, are sanctioned by the organized reaction of the community acting as a whole or through its authorities or certain groups or individuals. Thus, as we have seen, a man who violates certain prohibitions is expelled from the company of the *doro* men, and may
[628] not again eat together with them until he has been purified. In other
[627] cases the blood feud comes into operation, or again the culprit may
626 be tried and punished by the judicial authorities of the community,
171 i.e. by the tribal council. This last type of procedure has been developed among the Hottentots to a far greater extent than among

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Nama

and formerly they could even escape the death sentence for murder by a payment of cattle to the chief. But the possible shielding of murderers in this way always exposed them to the blood feud. If, through favouritism or for political reasons, a murderer was acquitted by the council, the nearest relative of the victim had the right to take the law into his own hands and to kill him.

Blood vengeance, *//khawab*, for the death of a near relative was a sacred duty to the Hottentots.[1] A son avenged the death of his father, a brother his brother, and if there was no son to take vengeance for the death of a woman her husband was obliged to do so. Killing in such a case was no crime, and neither the chief nor the council had the right to intervene and punish the avenger for his act. The case is cited of the well-known traveller and explorer Charles John Andersson, who about 1861 shot an Afrikander Hottentot near Windhoek in what he alleged was self-defence. He reported the matter to the chief Jonker Afrikaner, and as a result was brought before the chief and tribal council for trial. The council, after hearing the evidence, was satisfied, rightly or wrongly, that Andersson had exceeded his rights and had gone too far. But in view of the fact that he was a European and a British subject, the chief was reluctant to punish him. So, "I release you," said Jonker, "but," he added, "according to our law the brother of Hartebeest will kill you and must kill you, so flee for your life."[2]

In all probability the blood feud was formerly very extensively practised, especially in connection with the clan organization. We know from accounts left us by travellers among the Naman in the early part of last century that at that time the vendetta was still in full force among them, and the chief was unable in the interests of the tribe as a whole to prevent two clans from carrying out vengeance one on the other, or to force them to accept compensation. Alexander gives an account of such a vendetta among the Bondelswarts when he was travelling among them in 1836, and in the Rhenish Mission Record for 1856 there is an account of another vendetta at Bethanie among the !Aman Hottentots.[3] According to Wandres the feud ceased when revenge for the death had been taken, but other accounts imply that it was kept up as a continuous vendetta. Hahn states that

[1] Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 306; Wikar, op. cit., 134; Kohler, loc. cit.; Wandres, op. cit., 276.
[2] *Report on the Natives of S.W.A.*, 74.
[3] Hasenjäl, "Social Organization of the Nama," 18, quoting Alexander, op. cit., I, 187, cf. 201; and *Berichte der Rheinischen Mission*, 1856, p. 274.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Nama

628 in case of accidental death the relatives of the deceased would demand compensation in cattle. The murderer also had to slaughter a cow for a purification meal to which he invited his relatives and friends and those of the deceased. He himself was not allowed to eat of the meat, which was consumed by the guests, but was smeared with the blood as a sign of expiation. Von Burgsdorff (Kohler's informant) says, on the other hand, that the blood feud was exercised even when the death was accidental, and that the deed could in no way be compounded. Deliberate murder always provoked blood vengeance. The nearest male relative of the dead man had to seek out the murderer and kill him. If the murderer himself could not be got at, one of his clansmen, preferably a close relative, could be killed in his stead. If the avenger fell in the fight, his next relative had to carry on the feud; while if there were no close relative to avenge the murdered man, his clansmen would feel it an obligation to do so. The formal trial and punishment of a murderer by the tribal council is probably an institution of later days, but we have not enough information about the blood feud to determine the exact relation between these two forms of dealing with homicide.

Inter-Tribal Relations

Tribal Seniority

619 It has already been shown, in the course of our discussion, that
621 the nomadic pastoral life of the Hottentots, conditioned by the need of grass and water for their herds, compelled them to live and move in compact, often widely-separated communities. As soon as any group became so large that permanent cohesion and common movement proved impossible or even inconvenient, a swarm was of necessity thrown off, which moved to a distance in order to acquire a new pasture of sufficient extent for its use. In this way, for example, the members of a Nama tribe would become scattered over the country in smaller groups, each consisting of a clan or of some part of a clan. Such an offshoot might continue to regard itself at first as part of the parent tribe, but as it gradually increased in numbers and strength it would tend to claim independence and ultimately win acknowledgment as a separate tribe.

619 Thus, as we have seen, the seven principal tribes of the indigenous
648 Naman of South-West Africa are all traditionally descended from one line of ancestors, although in spite of this claim to a common ancestry the tribes have for a long time been independent of one

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Cape Hottentot

Uxoribus, quot habuere virus, tot digitorum articuli a primo minimi digiti incipiendo abscindentur. Polygamiae, *Mahammadorum* more, indulgent. *) Industria* gentis hujus ingenio culta, non legibus. Sola vindicta illis est homicidii poena; ubi tutelati cujusvoque consanguinei percussorem persequuntur; neque quiescunt, nisi ultionem fecerint; repertumque ilaque fortibus caedunt, telisve transverberant, cerebrum multis etiamnum ictibus feriendum. Caetera, sive adulterium, sive furtum, vilia non nisi talionis lege puniunt. Desique id sibi peculiare habent: si juvenis inter eos segretiat, pingues mactant bovem, faluti delictae convivii, atque, quae maxima opima sunt, exta cum omento segretantis tecto appendunt, unguentum pulvefacta deridunt, quae omen quisquam devorare debet. In consanguineos haereditarium jus apud eos, praesertim apud *Sonquas*, valet.

CAP. XXIII.

De Matrimonio.

Conjugium inire volentes suos parentes adiiciunt, illi *Praefectos*, ut sibi integrum sit, ducere virginem; sibi nunquam, nisi bajulum, ad minimum unum, bovem, transportando cum suppellectili tuguria, unam alteramve lactariam vaccam, emulgendo lacti, ovesque decem vel duodecim, celebrandis ejusdem epulis repetiture &c. possideant. Qui vero locupletiores, *Turcarum* ritu polygamiam exercent: atque ita si connubium non arrierit, subtam

*) I feel sure *industria* is a mistake for *instita*. Ten Rhyne in this sentence is simply transcribing Justin. See note *), p. 162. B.F.

---

*) This form of mutilation has already been discussed, see above, p. 68. A

*) Blood vengeance. | *Kharab*, for the death of a near relative was a sacred duty to the Hottentots, down till within fairly recent times. Killing in such a case was no crime, and neither the chief nor the council had the right to intervene and punish the avenger for his act (cf. discussion in Schapera, *op cit.*, 240-6).

**) The treatment of sick people is described more fully by Grevenbrook, see below, p. 243. F A similar observation to that of Ten Rhyne was recorded in 1710 by Commissary Ossell, who learned from some Hottentots, near the present Roere Hoek, that "In case of the very worst diseases, it is their custom to place

a A [See 8: Dapper, this File, cat. 116, p. 63. — Analysis]

b A [See 10: Grevenbrook, this File, cat. 116, p. 243. — A.]

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Cape Hottentot

Their wives have one finger joint, beginning from the first of the little finger, cut off for every man they have[m]. Like the Mahommedans the Hottentots indulge in polygamy. The justice of the people is administered according to their natural impulses, not regulated by law. The only punishment is that for homicide. In this event all the relatives of the dead man pursue the slayer; they do not rest till they have exacted vengeance. When they find the guilty man, they club him to death, or transfix him with spears, and continue to inflict blows upon him when already dead. Other offences, whether adultery or theft, they punish only by the lex talionis[n]. Finally, they have this peculiar custom: If a young man among them falls ill, they slaughter a fat ox, which will shortly furnish a delicious feast; and round the neck of the invalid they hang the largest of the internal organs, together with the omentum, and leave them there till they fall off rotten, when they must be eaten by the old men[o]. In the matter of succession the law of inheritance prevails among them, especially among the Essequas.

CHAP. XXIII.

Marriage.

When they wish to embark on marriage they approach their parents, who then approach the chief, so that they may have full permission to marry a maiden. But they never do this unless they possess at least one draught-ox, for removing the hut with its furniture, one or two milch cows, and ten or twelve sheep to celebrate the betrothal or the bringing home of the bride, etc. But those who are richer practise polygamy in the manner of the Turks; and

---

a sheep on its ground, and to cut from it from time to time, in the presence of the patient, a piece of meat, which is given to the healthy persons. This meat is placed on the fire for a short time and consumed half raw, while the patient is vigorously smeared all over with the warm fat, torn out of a living sheep. In addition, the entrails of the beast are hung round the patient's neck, the treatment they believe will effect a speedy cure" (V.R. Bat. I, 88). This rite (of which Ten Rhyne's description is but fragmentary), was not restricted to young men, as his statement would seem to imply, but was performed on all very sick people. His remark about the old men having to eat the rotten entrails which fell away from the neck of the patient is a ridiculous fantasy.